

5200 Forest Insect & Disease Control

September 1, 1977

Detection of Ponderosa Pine Mortality on the Tieton R.D.,
Wenatchee, N.F.

The Record

On August 22-26, 1977 a visit was made to the Tieton Ranger District, administered by the Wenatchee National Forest, to determine what factors were affecting the ponderosa pine in the area. I was accompanied by Steve Eubanks, TMA, and Dave Ruppert, District Silviculturist.

Several large diameter ponderosa pines near the District Office and adjacent campground were dead or dying. Other trees in the area had dying branches with severe dwarf mistletoe *Arceuthobium campylopodum* infestations. However, the cause of death of some branches was not readily apparent. Some of the dying trees were infested with western pine beetles *Dendroctonus brevicornis* and red turpentine beetles *D. valens*. No root diseases were detected.

We also visited an area on the District near Jump Off Lookout where small groups of ponderosa pine were dead or dying. All diameter classes appeared to be affected. Some western pine beetle and red turpentine beetle activity was noted. These trees were also examined for root diseases, but none were found. It appears that the severe drought experienced this season may have triggered the insect outbreak. Unless the infested trees are promptly salvaged, it is highly probable that the beetle population will spread to other drought stressed trees next spring and early summer. While surveying for laminated root rot on the District, several patches of dead grand fir were noted. Most of the trees showed signs of fir engraver beetle *Scolytus ventralis* activity. Some of the beetle-infested trees were infected with either *Armillaria mella* or *Phellinus (Poria) weirii*, both are root-rotting fungi.

Recommendations by Robert Dolph, Regional Supervisory Entomologist, call for removal of all pines infested with western pine beetles before June 1 of the following year to prevent spread of the beetles to adjacent healthy trees. Grand fir infested with *Scolytus* should also be salvaged as quickly as possible. Assistance on identifying infested trees is available from Forest Insect and Disease Management. In addition FIDM funds may be available to help layout salvage sales. Before these funds can be made available, however, an entomologist will have to make a biological evaluation of the infested stands. This service is also available upon request.

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Tieton, R.D.